



NEWS & INFORMATION

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Iowa Active in National Energy Efficiency Action Plan, Commences Plans to Reduce Energy Use

As a part of Iowa's efforts related to a national action plan to increase energy efficiency, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) today announced the start of the 2006 Iowa Weatherization Challenge. Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack last year initiated this growing statewide effort.

The IUB is again leading this year's initiative to reduce the state's energy use, in part, by helping Iowans prepare for projected high winter heating bills and lessen their impact. The IUB looks forward to working with local community organizations across Iowa to recruit volunteers and solicit donations to help weatherize homes for Iowa's low-income families, elderly, disabled individuals, and others needing assistance in their community. The IUB will provide matching grants up to \$500 to assist qualified community groups from across Iowa in their efforts to help Iowa meet its objectives. At least \$10,000 will be available for these grants this year. The grants will be for weatherization projects to be completed by November 30, 2006, and applications should be submitted by September 15, 2006. A grant application form will be available by mid-August at www.state.ia.us/iub.

The IUB is ready to assist community groups with their events by helping to secure training in weatherization methods for volunteers, receive donated or favorably priced supplies, locate appropriate weatherization sites, and issue news releases and communicate with the media. Organizations interested in participating in the Iowa Weatherization Challenge may obtain an organizing kit at www.state.ia.us/iub or may call the IUB toll free at 1-877-565-4451.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for all Iowans who are capable of helping in some way to become involved in their local community and help not only their neighbors and friends, but people all across Iowa and the United States by saving energy," said IUB Chairman John Norris.

It is estimated that U.S. consumers could save hundreds of billions of dollars on their utility bills over the next 10 to 15 years through greater use of cost-effective energy efficiency. Continued reductions in consumer use of energy supplies like natural gas are also expected to result in lower market prices over time.

Iowa has been a national leader in implementing effective energy efficiency programs for decades. In 2005 alone, Iowa customers of the state's investor-owned utilities realized savings of about 1.6 million megawatt hours of electricity, worth about \$106 million, and about 70 million CCF of natural gas, worth about \$81 million, as a result of all the energy efficiency measures implemented through these programs since 1990. Iowa and its utilities are committed to the further expansion and enhancement of these programs. The Iowa Energy Management Team, which encompasses the Iowa Weatherization Challenge working group, is re-evaluating the state's current energy efficiency programs, rate designs for the purpose of ensuring price signals that promote energy efficiency both now and in the future, demand response, energy-saving technologies, building codes, and legislative policies.

(More)

The national action plan was also released today at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Summer Meeting in San Francisco, California. IUB Board Member and NARUC President Diane Munns and James Rogers, CEO of Duke Energy and the Edison Electric Institute introduced it. Iowa joins utility commissions from more than 40 states that have endorsed the national action plan recommendations. These include making energy efficiency a high priority resource; treating energy efficiency like coal, natural gas, nuclear and other energy resources in energy plans; promoting long-term, stable program funding to deliver cost-effective efficiency to consumers; broadly communicating the benefits of efficiency; and aligning utility incentives and ratemaking processes to promote investments in efficiency. These recommendations are built upon best practices from successful efficiency programs already operating in many areas, to remove barriers that have limited utilities and customers from pursuing cost-effective energy efficiency resources.

This national action plan, if fully implemented, could help defer the need for 40 new 500-megawatt power plants, avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from more than 35 million vehicles, lower costs of air pollution controls, and reduce natural gas prices. More information on the National Action Plan for Energy Efficiency is available at www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/eeactionplan.htm.

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